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Thursday, 25 April 1996, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

The meeting was called to order at 5.25 p.m.

Agenda item 44 *(continued)*

The situation in the Middle East

Draft resolution (A/50/L.70)

The President: Representatives will recall that the Assembly decided this morning to proceed immediately this afternoon to consideration of the draft resolution, as orally revised.

Mr. Elaraby (Egypt): Allow me first of all to apologize to you, Mr. President, and through you to all the members of the General Assembly for delaying the proceedings to this afternoon. May I also pay tribute to you for your patience and your leadership, for which we are all grateful.

The co-sponsors of the draft resolution, on whose behalf I am speaking, have listened throughout the debate to all the views expressed. The co-sponsors presented a draft which they hope will be supported by the Assembly; it reflects the gravity of the situation. This morning we entered into long and arduous negotiations with the parties that wanted to participate, and, as a result I now have the pleasure to give details of further proposed oral revisions to draft resolution A/50/L.70.

First, we propose that in the third preambular paragraph "recalling" should be replaced by "reaffirming". The paragraph will now read

> "*Reaffirming* the relevant Security Council resolutions on the situation in Lebanon, in particular resolution 425 (1978) of 19 March 1978".

It is then proposed to add a new preambular paragraph, which will be the fourth preambular paragraph, to read:

> "*Reaffirming* also the United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and in particular the principles of withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories and the right of all States in the region"

I emphasize "the right of all States in the region"

> "to live in peace and security within their internationally recognized boundaries".

The co-sponsors believe that the proposed new fourth preambular paragraph will make the draft resolution more acceptable to members of the General Assembly. On behalf of the co-sponsors, I extend our thanks for the debate and appeal to all Member States to consider the gravity of the situation in Lebanon and vote in favour of the draft resolution as orally revised.

The President: I understand that in the light of the statement made by the representative of Egypt, the Russian Federation does not insist that its oral amendment be acted upon.

96-85609 (E)

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We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/50/L.70, as orally revised. The debate is thus closed and no new substantive proposals or amendments will be entertained.

Before calling on the representative of the Russian Federation, who wishes to speak in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*interpretation from Russian*): During the discussions in the General Assembly, the Russian delegation had the opportunity to explain in detail its fundamental position with regard to the tragic events in Lebanon. We clearly stated that what is happening there is unacceptable, that Israel's actions undermine the unity of the Lebanese State, do damage to the civilian population and may have the most negative consequences for the Middle East peace process.

We consider the draft resolution presented by the Arab Group with all its emotion, to be geared, on the whole, to achieving an immediate end to hostilities.

Paragraph 1 of the draft resolution has an appeal clearly addressed to all parties, and it is important that, under paragraph 2, the diplomatic efforts to this end are to be supported. In this regard, the draft resolution expresses exactly what the Security Council adopted unanimously in its resolution 1052 (1996). Key elements in today's draft confirm the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon, as well as the right of all States in the region, including, of course, Israel, to live in peace and security within internationally recognized boundaries.

My delegation would certainly have preferred a more balanced draft fully reflecting all aspects of the complicated situation in Lebanon. A question also arises with regard to the sub-title of the draft resolution. We regret the haste with which the draft is being put to the vote, and think that the possibilities of gaining further support for the draft were not fully utilized.

None the less, the news from Lebanon, especially today, is that the hostilities there are not abating. Israel continues without justification to fire on the United Nations forces in Lebanon. The casualties among the civilian population are increasing. In this context, we feel that the political signal being sent by the draft resolution is particularly timely.

In the light of all these factors, the Russian delegation will vote for the draft resolution. Russia has consistently and firmly called upon all sides to show restraint. We are convinced that only through political means can the vicious circle of violence be broken.

As a co-sponsor of the peace process, Russia insists that Israel and Lebanon get down to reaching a peace settlement quickly on the basis of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which calls for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, and that the security of all countries in the region be guaranteed.

The President: We have heard the only speaker in explanation of vote before the vote.

The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/50/L.70, as orally revised.

In this connection, I should like to announce that the following countries are co-sponsors of the draft resolution, as orally revised: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

We shall now begin the voting process.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Colombia, Comoros, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Malaysia, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia,

Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Brazil, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Chile, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malawi, Malta, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Samoa, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Swaziland, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Venezuela

Draft resolution A/50/L.70, as orally revised, was adopted by 64 votes to 2, with 65 abstentions (resolution 50/22 C).

[Subsequently the delegations of Belize and of Bosnia and Herzegovina advised the Secretariat that they had intended to vote in favour.]

The President: Before calling on the first speaker in explanation of vote after the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Matri (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): My delegation voted for draft resolution A/50/L.70, as orally revised. However, it should be understood that this vote does not mean that we recognize the Zionist entity.

The delegation of my country is fully convinced that a true, just, comprehensive and lasting peace can be established only with the creation of a democratic, non-racist State, similar to that created recently in South Africa and including Arabs and Jews, on all the land of Palestine.

Mr. Fulci (Italy): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union. The following countries, which are associated with the European Union, join in this statement: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The European Union clearly expressed its position on the aggravation of the situation in the Middle East in the declaration on Lebanon adopted by its Foreign Ministers in Luxembourg on 22 April 1996. The declaration renewed the appeal for an immediate cease-fire, in this context supporting Security Council resolution 1052 (1996). The Foreign Ministers' declaration emphasized that only a political solution can bring an end to the current crisis and allow the peace process to resume its course.

Following the introduction of the draft resolution, which has just been adopted, the European Union contacted the co-sponsors of the draft resolution in an attempt to reach agreement on a text that could perhaps have obtained greater, if not general, support from the General Assembly. Despite the goodwill and efforts of all those involved in this negotiation, it proved impossible to reach agreement. For this reason, all 15 members of the European Union, and the associated countries which I have mentioned, decided to abstain.

This said, the European Union insists that all the parties, whether directly or indirectly involved in the current conflict, contribute to an immediate halt to hostilities and acts of violence, with the aim of allowing peace negotiations to resume.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): As we stated earlier, we attach the utmost importance to respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries. In this context, we have also emphasized that the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) is vital for the attainment of a just and viable peace in the Middle East. However, we also believe that terrorism is the biggest danger to the peace process, and that the fight against terrorism, within the bounds of lawfulness, constitutes one of the indispensable pillars of the peace process. We abstained in the vote because the resolution just adopted does not contain a reference to this fact. Had the draft resolution contained such a reference, we would have voted in favour.

Mr. Jansen (Canada): Canada abstained on the resolution. We regret that it was not possible to reach agreement on a more balanced text which we could have supported. Canada has continuously urged an immediate cease-fire and a long-term settlement, and we very much hope that current diplomatic efforts will achieve this very soon. We deplore the loss of civilian lives in the ongoing hostilities in Lebanon, and the attacks on United Nations personnel. Canada calls for respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon, and the implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978). We also reaffirm the right of all States in the region to live in peace and security within their internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Izquierdo (Ecuador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The delegation of Ecuador abstained on the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.70, because it does not reflect all the aspects of the crisis in Lebanon.

My delegation considers it essential to support the peace process in the Middle East, initiated at the Madrid conference in 1991, and to contribute as effectively as possible to strengthening the bilateral and multilateral negotiating mechanisms, which must continue. However, we reiterate Ecuador's steadfast rejection of the occupation or acquisition of territory by force, and our firm conviction that a peaceful, negotiated solution must be found to territorial problems between States, in accordance with the principles established in the Charter and the norms of international law.

Finally, Ecuador rejects the use of violence in international relations, and firmly condemns acts of terrorism, whatever the source. We consider that the norms of international humanitarian law must be fully implemented, particularly with regard to the protection of the civilian population, who have been the greatest victims of the recent armed conflicts.

Mr. Al-Habib (Islamic Republic of Iran): My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/50/L.70. However, we express reservations about those parts of the resolution that might be construed as giving any recognition to Israel.

Mr. Agathocleous (Cyprus): The vote by Cyprus in favour of the resolution was a vote on principle. It was also based on our concern about the continuation of acts of violence and the use of force that lead to the loss of life, especially of innocent people. Inevitably such acts lead to a spiral of force. They must be stopped immediately. Arguments can go on for ever; however, a lost life is lost for ever.

We strongly agree that everyone must respect the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of all States, as well as the right of every State to exist in conditions of security and peace.

Cyprus has friendly relations with all the countries in the area. We believe that peace and stability must be established in the Middle East, an area which should be given the chance to reconstruct itself and begin a new era — an era of cooperation and development for the benefit of all the people in the region. The peace process must continue unhindered and uninhibited towards its goal of a permanent and comprehensive peace, a goal to which we all aspire.

Mr. Camacho Omiste (Bolivia) (*interpretation from Spanish*): This morning I had the honour of informing you, Mr. President, and the General Assembly that the Bolivian delegation had made the necessary payment to reduce its arrears and was therefore able to exercise its right to vote, but the Secretary-General had informed us that for administrative reasons some additional hours were needed to process the payment. I therefore wish to place on record that Bolivia supports the resolution.

Mrs. Gittens-Joseph (Trinidad and Tobago): Trinidad and Tobago supported the resolution contained in document A/50/L.70 to register its abhorrence at the recent emergence of human tragedy which is being inflicted upon the people of the region, leading to the loss of innocent life. The attack on the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) camp cannot be condoned.

My delegation, however, would have preferred a more balanced text. In this respect, it fully endorses what Jamaica stated yesterday on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) States, calling for respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of all States in the region within their internationally recognized boundaries.

It is the hope of my delegation, Sir, that good sense will prevail, and all the parties concerned will cooperate so that the diplomatic efforts under way to secure a cease-fire will meet with success soon, the peace process can be expedited and the people in the region will enjoy a just and lasting peace, which has eluded them for too long.

Mr. Tejera París (Venezuela) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On 23 April the Government of Venezuela stated that it was following with grave concern events in Lebanon since 11 April, which, in addition to aggravating tensions, had become an obstacle to the establishment of lasting peace in the Middle East, upsetting the important achievements attained by the peace process which began in September 1993.

We profoundly regret the loss of life among innocent victims of this armed confrontation, and we want to express our condolences to, and solidarity with, their families.

The Venezuelan Government has urged implementation of Security Council resolution 1052 (1996) of 18 April, in which the Security Council urges the parties to immediately cease hostilities, as well as of the provisions of the Council's resolution 425 (1978), which, it should be recalled, has lost neither its validity nor its potential.

We must oppose any interference with the sovereignty and territorial integrity of any country. The Venezuelan Government reiterates its categorical rejection of terrorism as a means of political struggle as well as of indiscriminate armed action which, in addition to threatening regional stability, violate the universal principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In conclusion, my delegation regrets that in the draft resolution, which contains some elements that we share, amendments were not included to make it more balanced. There was a lack of patience just when it was needed, and too much haste at the wrong time.

Mr. Gutiérrez (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): On instructions from my Foreign Ministry, my delegation would like to explain Costa Rica's vote in favour of draft resolution A/50/L.70. Costa Rica is a country with a long democratic and pacifist tradition. Its actions in international forums are guided by principles and involve the search for harmonious, viable solutions to global problems.

We therefore do not agree that armed actions are an appropriate way to resolve conflicts. Costa Rica does not agree with Israel's bombing of cities in southern Lebanon. My country considers terrorism to be one of the greatest evils of this end-of-the century era and we therefore strongly condemn all forms of terrorism. This, of course, includes terrorist provocations in Lebanon.

As a country that cherishes peace and democracy, Costa Rica makes a heartfelt appeal to all the parties in conflict to renounce the use of force and resolve their differences by peaceful means. Until there is a cease-fire, allowing dialogue and negotiation to take place, it will be impossible to achieve the ideals of peace which our country has always defended in this and other forums.

Costa Rica welcomes all diplomatic efforts, and especially the efforts of the United States and the European Union — in particular by France — aimed at a peaceful solution to the problem of Lebanon, as well as any additional effort that can ensure the continuity and success of peace agreements in the region.

Mr. Cassar (Malta): Malta associates itself with the statement made earlier by the Permanent Representative of Italy on behalf of the European Union in explanation of vote.

Malta believes in the right of all peoples in the Middle East to live in peace and freedom. Malta believes in the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the region, and the right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats of acts of force. Malta believes that the loss of life, agony, anguish, and destruction which violence has inflicted on the peoples in the Middle East over the years — and again in recent days — should come to an end.

My Government has already expressed its deep concern at the negative turn of events which the fresh outbreak of violence and the escalation of military activities in northern Israel and Lebanon represent. Escalation of military activity has caused untold suffering to the civilian populations and to international personnel, threatens the lives and security of all people in the region and is jeopardizing the peace process in the Middle East.

Difficult as it is when the integrity of the State is placed at risk, it is only through the political will not to be entrapped by provocation and through a continued exercise of self-restraint that the parties involved can save themselves from being dragged into a spiral of violence which multiplies human suffering and easily leads to a cycle of action, reaction and over-reaction.

In this spirit, we supported the contacts between delegations to seek a more balanced text, which gathers around it the widest possible consensus, which the

current tragedy merits. Regretfully, these contacts have not yielded the desired results.

In abstaining, Malta renews its call for an immediate cessation of hostilities by all parties and its support for ongoing diplomatic efforts to that end. Malta welcomes the Security Council's reaffirmation of the international community's commitment to the territorial integrity, sovereignty and political independence of Lebanon within its internationally recognized boundaries and to the security of all States in the region.

Mr. Kulla (Albania): The delegation of the Republic of Albania abstained during the vote which has just been taken. We express the most sincere sympathy to the Government and people of Lebanon over the loss of a great number of innocent civilian lives, and our deepest condolences to the bereaved families who lost their loved ones.

My Government fully supports the peace process in the Middle East. We emphasize that only a peace process through diplomatic efforts gives hope of reaching agreement. To this end, the engagement of all parties is needed. We are against terrorism, and at the same time we support the full implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) and the efforts of Lebanon to extend the authority of its Government over all its territory to make it possible to stop the terrorist acts originating in its country. My Government affirms its full support for the territorial integrity, political independence and sovereignty of Lebanon.

Mr. Kamal (Pakistan): My delegation voted in favour of the resolution on the subject of the Israeli military attacks against Lebanon and their consequences. Our support would have been even stronger had the draft resolution not been subjected to an amendment, with the addition of a new fourth preambular paragraph, brought about by the oral amendment originally moved by the Russian Federation this morning.

This new preambular paragraph dilutes the clear focus of the resolution, which should have remained on the tragic situation in Lebanon alone. The new preambular paragraph also contains language which is apparently based on Security Council resolution 242 (1967), but which is in actual fact different from the language of that Security Council resolution, and is therefore subject to misinterpretation regarding explicit or implicit recognition of Israel.

Pakistan's position on this subject is well known and does not need to be reiterated yet again.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote after the vote.

I now call on the representative of Lebanon.

Mr. Moubarak (Lebanon): Let me at the outset express to you, Sir, the satisfaction of my Government, my people and myself for your positive attitude in convening this resumed session of the General Assembly on the situation in the Middle East to discuss the Israeli attacks against Lebanon and their consequences.

My thanks also go to all the personnel of the General Assembly.

Secondly, I would like to express the deep appreciation of my Government and people, and my own deep appreciation, for the cooperation we received from the Secretary-General and his assistants in order to resume the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

Let me also express our deep gratitude to all those delegations that voted in favour of draft resolution A/50/L.70, which was sponsored by delegations from the Arab Group, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and many others. My thanks go to the Chairman of the Arab Group, Ambassador Samhan, of the United Arab Emirates; the Chairman of the Non-Aligned Movement, Ambassador Londoño Paredes; and the Permanent Observer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, Ambassador Ansay.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Nabil Elaraby, Permanent Representative of Egypt, for his collaboration, which included coordinating constantly with us in the debate on the Israeli attacks against Lebanon and their consequences.

Last but not least, I would also like to express my gratitude to Ambassador Francesco Paolo Fulci, Permanent Representative of Italy and representative of the Presidency of the European Union, for his collaboration and for trying to bridge gaps to reach a common understanding with the European Union, and the Ambassador of Guinea for being most cooperative as Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in New York.

The General Assembly, the highest political body in the international community, has today condemned the Israeli military attacks against the civilian population in Lebanon — especially against the United Nations Fijian headquarters at Qana, killing scores of civilians — that violate the rules of international humanitarian law on the protection of civilians. It has also called upon Israel to immediately cease its military action against Lebanese territorial integrity and to withdraw its forces forthwith from Lebanese territory in conformity with Security Council resolution 425 (1978).

Today the General Assembly has clearly denounced Israel as the aggressor. Now it is up to Israel to abide by the will of the international community by ceasing its attacks against Lebanon and ceasing its military attacks against the civilian population in my country. The Assembly considered that Lebanon was entitled to appropriate redress for the destruction it has suffered and that Israel is responsible for this compensation.

I said last week on many occasions in the Security Council that violence would not achieve anything. It is high time for Israel to change its distorted logic and to abide by the Charter of the United Nations, international law and Security Council resolutions. It is high time for Israel to understand the Middle East. Israel cannot have it both ways. If it wants peace, it has to abide by the land for peace equation of the Madrid peace conference. Israel cannot escape its international obligations. Security Council resolution 425 (1978) has to be implemented fully and immediately.

Today is the fourteenth day of Israel's continued aggression against Lebanon. Bombardments are still going on against the Lebanese civilian population, in violation of all norms and principles of international law. Today a whole family of nine was killed by the Israeli air force. This only adds to the massacres already perpetrated by the Israeli Army against the civilian population of my country. It is high time for Israel to understand that it is not above the law. Israel will ultimately have to abide by this conclusion — whether it likes it or not.

We would have liked to see those few countries that voted against our text instead play a positive role in forcing Israel to stop its madness against Lebanon.

My country and its people are enduring bloodshed and death. Tomorrow a third week of Israeli killings will start in Lebanon. It is high time to stop the Israeli killing; it is high time to stop using Lebanon as a playground for Israeli politics; it is high time to stop using Lebanon as an electoral platform for Israeli politicians. What is taking place today in Lebanon is a joint venture of Israeli terror and Israeli elections.

I would like to stress once again that what is going on in Lebanon is resistance against foreign occupation. Israel has to come to the conclusion that only Security Council resolution 425 (1978) will pave the way to peace and security.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 44.

The meeting rose at 6.20 p.m.